

**From:** Abboud, Michael [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=B6F5AF791A1842F1ADCC088CBF9ED3CE-ABBOUD, MIC]  
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**Subject:** EPA News Highlights 3.26.18  
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### EPA News Highlights 3.26.18

#### The Oklahoman: Ban On "Secret Science" In EPA Regulation Makes Sense

The Environmental Protection Agency has announced it will now base new regulations only on the findings of scientific studies whose data and methodology are made public so they can be subjected to independent review. That's a sound move in line with basic scientific transparency and professionalism. Yet it's being treated as a sign of impending apocalypse by some on the left, which says much about the questionable validity of that group's policy prescriptions. In an interview with The Daily Caller News Foundation, Administrator Scott Pruitt said the EPA will end its use of studies that do not publish underlying data, only conclusions. "Otherwise, it's not transparent. It's not objectively measured, and that's important," Pruitt said. In the past, the EPA has advanced air-quality regulations that imposed massive costs based primarily on the findings of two studies done in the 1990s that linked fine particulate pollution to premature death. Neither study made associated data public.

#### RealClearPolitics: Pruitt Leads The Way On Regulatory Rollback

This month, the Environmental Protection Agency released its EPA Year in Review for 2017–2018. To call it impressive would be a gross understatement. With Administrator Scott Pruitt leading the charge, the agency has shown unrivaled commitment to carrying out the president’s agenda of deregulation. Before taking over at the EPA, Pruitt was as a leading opponent of regulatory overreach by the agency. As general of Oklahoma, for instance, he dissolved the Environmental Protection Unit and instead created a Federalism Unit to fight President Obama’s aggressive regulatory agenda. He brought more than a dozen lawsuits against the EPA, fighting such rules as the Cross State Air Pollution Rule and the Clean Water Rule, and successfully challenging the Clean Power Plan. Now, as EPA administrator, Pruitt is taking even more direct action and doing so in a cooperative and transparent manner. When Office of Management and Budget Director Mick Mulvaney discussed the deregulation effort at the Conservative Political Action Conference last month, he highlighted the rules that were top priority for the administration’s regulatory roll back: the Waters of the United States rule and the Clean Power Plan. Both fall within Pruitt’s jurisdiction at the EPA. No surprise that action on EPA regulations has moved to the forefront of the administration’s agenda.

#### Montana Standard: Omnibus Bill Restores EPA Funding

The Environmental Protection Agency is getting more than it asked for this fiscal year due to the \$1.3 trillion omnibus spending package passed in Congress last week and signed by President Donald Trump Friday. Trump had wanted to slash the EPA’s budget by 31 percent, a reduction of \$2.6 billion from what the EPA had to operate on in 2017. The EPA’s biggest operating budget since its inception in 1970 came along in 2010, when the Democratic-controlled Congress and President Barack Obama gave the EPA \$10.2 billion to work with. EPA administrator Scott Pruitt asked for \$5.655 billion last May to operate the agency this year. The ink on Trump’s signature to the 2,232-page bill was still wet enough Friday that the EPA had not altered its website to reflect the new spending levels for 2018. What the infusion of federal dollars will mean for the EPA — and more specifically for Butte and Anaconda and EPA Region 8 as a whole — is not clear. Because Congress could not pass a federal spending bill last fall, this bill’s passage comes six months into the current fiscal year.

#### Zanesville Times Recorder: Farmers Don’t Need Government Overreach

I am a farmer who raises cattle and hay. I think the EPA got far too nosy into farmers’ lives under the Obama Administration and that created a needless ordeal for us. I am glad that the Trump Administration is addressing this problem by pushing for smart reforms to EPA regulations affecting agriculture. A few years ago, the EPA told us that we had to put fences around all of our creeks and ponds so the cattle couldn’t run in them. The Waters of the United State Rule even gave the government jurisdiction over dry creeks. I don’t think matters such as these are any of the government’s business. They just don’t have the right to tell us how to do things. When it comes to banning products, we need to make sure that we aren’t going after ones that are safe. The previous administration even wanted to ban safe pesticides and that doesn’t help farmers at all. These are all examples of how the federal government further intruded into our land and our lives. Now, our leaders have a chance to correct some of the regulations that were harming farmers. That’s a good thing. After all, these regulations weren’t helping anyone anyway. We need our government officials to use common sense. We don’t need to be burdened with unnecessary regulations. Small farmers don’t make much money to begin with and we should not be harmed by government overreach. I am glad the Trump Administration is working to reverse these intrusions.

#### The Wall Street Journal: EPA Tentatively Decides To Ease Vehicle Emission Standards

The Environmental Protection Agency has tentatively concluded that future vehicle emissions standards should be eased, a decision long lobbied for by car companies that argued looming regulations are too stringent and need revision. The EPA has drafted a so-called final determination that outlines arguments for relaxing standards requiring auto makers to cut emissions enough so vehicles sold average more than 50 miles a gallon by 2025, said a person familiar with the matter. The EPA delivered the draft, which covers standards between 2022 and 2025, to the Office of Management and Budget this week, the person said. The EPA faces an April 1 deadline to determine whether the targets should be strengthened, relaxed or left unchanged. No changes would be imminent even with the issuing of a final determination. Rules would have to be devised afterward detailing any revisions, a process that could take weeks or months. Bloomberg News earlier reported on the draft determination.

#### National News Highlights 3.26.18

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The Trump administration expelled 60 Russian diplomats on Monday and ordered Russia's consulate in Seattle to close, as the United States and European nations sought to jointly punish Moscow for its alleged role in poisoning an ex-spy in Britain. Senior Trump administration officials said all 60 Russians were spies working in the U.S. under diplomatic cover, including a dozen at Russia's mission to the United Nations. The officials said the administration was taking the action to send a message to Russia's leaders about the "unacceptably high" number of Russian intelligence operatives in the U.S. The expelled Russians will have seven days to leave the U.S, said the officials. They weren't authorized to be identified by name and requested anonymity. They added that the Seattle consulate is a counter-intelligence concern because of its proximity to a U.S. Navy base. White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders said the actions would make the U.S. safer by "reducing Russia's ability to spy on Americans and to conduct covert operations" that threaten U.S. national security.

### TRUMP TWEETS

#### The Oklahoman

<http://newsok.com/article/5588210/ban-on-secret-science-in-epa-regulation-makes-sense>

#### **Ban On "Secret Science" In EPA Regulation Makes Sense**

By The Oklahoman Editorial Board, 3/26/18

THE Environmental Protection Agency has announced it will now base new regulations only on the findings of scientific studies whose data and methodology are made public so they can be subjected to independent review. That's a sound move in line with basic scientific transparency and professionalism.

Yet it's being treated as a sign of impending apocalypse by some on the left, which says much about the questionable validity of that group's policy prescriptions.

In an interview with The Daily Caller News Foundation, Administrator Scott Pruitt said the EPA will end its use of studies that do not publish underlying data, only conclusions. "Otherwise, it's not transparent. It's not objectively measured, and that's important," Pruitt said.

In the past, the EPA has advanced air-quality regulations that imposed massive costs based primarily on the findings of two studies done in the 1990s that linked fine particulate pollution to premature death. Neither study made associated data public.

U.S. Rep. Lamar Smith, R-Texas and chairman of the House Committee on Science, Space and Technology, has long criticized the use of "secret science" and authored legislation to curtail its use by regulators. Last year, Smith said the EPA had "routinely relied on questionable science based on nonpublic information that could not be reproduced, a basic requirement of the scientific method."

"Americans deserve to see the science for themselves," Smith said. "If the EPA has nothing to hide, why not make the scientific data it uses for its regulations publicly available? What was the EPA hiding?"

That will strike most people as a fair question. But to some activists, the idea that science should involve review and scrutiny is apparently anathema. In response to a prior effort to ban "secret science" at the EPA, Andrew Rosenberg,

director of the Union of Concerned Scientists' Center for Science and Democracy, said transparency would “gut the EPA at the expense of public health and safety.”

That same group has claimed release of data would require publicizing the confidential patient data of individuals. But Steve Milloy, publisher of JunkScience.com and a senior fellow at the Energy and Environmental Legal Institute, notes that California already makes similar data available in its “Public Use Death Files,” and that has been accomplished without violating patient privacy.

Other critics object that there are costs involved in scrubbing data sets so patient privacy is protected. Perhaps, but that doesn't mean the public should be kept in the dark about the data and methods used to justify literally billions in new regulatory burden.

Scientific studies are as susceptible to human error and even outright fraud as any other endeavor — particularly when such studies are used in the political realm. Facilitating transparency and independent review will reduce the chances of bad science harming Americans with half-baked regulations, and should enhance the case for regulations when the underlying science has withstood independent scrutiny.

Given the stakes for public health and the national economy, Americans must be assured government regulations are based on sound science, not someone's “trust me” assurances.

## RealClearPolitics

[https://www.realclearpolicy.com/articles/2018/03/26/pruitt\\_leads\\_the\\_way\\_on\\_regulatory\\_rollback\\_110563.html](https://www.realclearpolicy.com/articles/2018/03/26/pruitt_leads_the_way_on_regulatory_rollback_110563.html)

### **Pruitt Leads The Way On Regulatory Rollback**

By Ken Cuccinelli, 3/26/18

This month, the Environmental Protection Agency released its EPA Year in Review for 2017–2018. To call it impressive would be a gross understatement. With Administrator Scott Pruitt leading the charge, the agency has shown unrivaled commitment to carrying out the president's agenda of deregulation.

Before taking over at the EPA, Pruitt was as a leading opponent of regulatory overreach by the agency. As general of Oklahoma, for instance, he dissolved the Environmental Protection Unit and instead created a Federalism Unit to fight President Obama's aggressive regulatory agenda. He brought more than a dozen lawsuits against the EPA, fighting such rules as the Cross State Air Pollution Rule and the Clean Water Rule, and successfully challenging the Clean Power Plan.

Now, as EPA administrator, Pruitt is taking even more direct action and doing so in a cooperative and transparent manner. When Office of Management and Budget Director Mick Mulvaney discussed the deregulation effort at the Conservative Political Action Conference last month, he highlighted the rules that were top priority for the administration's regulatory roll back: the Waters of the United States rule and the Clean Power Plan. Both fall within Pruitt's jurisdiction at the EPA. No surprise that action on EPA regulations has moved to the forefront of the administration's agenda.

From his first days at the agency, Pruitt took steps to facilitate cooperation with the states on environmental policy. Federalism is an essential principle of American governance, and Pruitt has put this principle into practice. During his first year, Pruitt travelled to 30 states to discuss the EPA's work, personally meeting with 34 governors — Democrats and Republicans — as well as over 350 stakeholder groups. This level of personal involvement is nearly unparalleled, even inside an administration with such a clear focus on deregulation. And it is paying dividends.

The EPA Year in Review booklet is nearly 40 pages long, outlining the regulatory rollback, increased transparency, and government reform measures accomplished in the last year alone. This includes finalizing 22 deregulatory actions and savings of more than \$1 billion in regulatory costs, which previously fell on Americans' shoulders. By comparison, a similar document out of the Department of Labor, headed by Secretary of Labor Alexander Acosta, is only four pages long.

As he says in a letter at the front of the EPA Year in Review, Administrator Pruitt “look[s] forward to working together to accomplish even more progress in 2018.” We applaud Mr. Pruitt’s accomplishments in his first year as head of EPA, and hope that his success provides an example to other agencies. Executive agencies can take the lead on growing the economy by freeing Americans from excessive regulatory burdens. This, the EPA — with Pruitt at the helm — has proven.

## Montana Standard

[http://mtstandard.com/news/local/omnibus-bill-restores-epa-funding/article\\_2fa78f2b-666e-5edb-b2f1-716f1690077a.html](http://mtstandard.com/news/local/omnibus-bill-restores-epa-funding/article_2fa78f2b-666e-5edb-b2f1-716f1690077a.html)

### **Omnibus Bill Restores EPA Funding**

By Susan Dunlap, 3/25/18

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Trump had wanted to slash the EPA’s budget by 31 percent, a reduction of \$2.6 billion from what the EPA had to operate on in 2017. The EPA’s biggest operating budget since its inception in 1970 came along in 2010, when the Democratic-controlled Congress and President Barack Obama gave the EPA \$10.2 billion to work with.

EPA administrator Scott Pruitt asked for \$5.655 billion last May to operate the agency this year.

The ink on Trump’s signature to the 2,232-page bill was still wet enough Friday that the EPA had not altered its website to reflect the new spending levels for 2018. What the infusion of federal dollars will mean for the EPA — and more specifically for Butte and Anaconda and EPA Region 8 as a whole — is not clear. Because Congress could not pass a federal spending bill last fall, this bill’s passage comes six months into the current fiscal year.

The EPA’s Washington D.C. office did not respond to a request for comment. The EPA’s Denver office responded with a note that inquiries about EPA budget concerns should be forwarded to the Washington D.C. office.

The \$1.3 trillion omnibus spending package rushed through both houses of Congress last week returns the EPA’s budget to above the spending level it had in 2017 and restores it closer to the 2016 budget level. The EPA’s 2017 general operating budget was \$8 billion. Congress reinstated the EPA’s 2018 budget to \$8.1 billion plus an added \$763 million for various EPA water infrastructure programs and Superfund site spending, according to TheHill.com.

The EPA’s 2016 budget was \$8.1 billion.

The bill passed the Senate 65-32 with three who didn’t vote. Democrat Sen. Jon Tester voted for the bill. Republican Sen. Steve Daines voted against it.

Tester said Saturday, “It is critically important for Butte’s families and businesses that the EPA live up to its commitment to remove waste and contamination. This funding bill restores the resources needed to hold polluters accountable, builds on the progress that has been made, and ensures folks in Butte have access to clean water.”

Daines was on his way to China on a delegation trip, leading a group of senators. A spokesperson said, “Senator Daines believes the Superfund sites must be cleaned up and will continue to support funding, but it’s critical that funding is implemented effectively.”

The House gave its approval of the bill by a 256-167 vote with seven abstaining. Republican Congressman Greg Gianforte also voted against the bill, although he told The Montana Standard last summer during a press conference that he wanted to “put funding back in” for the EPA.

A spokesman for Gianforte said, "Greg has consistently supported the Superfund to clean up our impacted Montana communities. Greg will continue being a strong voice to make our communities whole again while also working to protect Montanans by standing up to Washington's overspending."

There were many conservative critics of the omnibus package. One primary complaint was that no one had a chance to read the more than 2,000 pages before votes began on the House floor. Conservative Kentucky Congressman Rand Paul tweeted Thursday that it took him more than two hours just to print all 2,232 pages. He later tweeted he had ordered in pizza to help him get through it.

Trump waffled on signing the bill Friday morning. He tweeted in the early hours of the day that the bill didn't give enough money for a border wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. Trump ran his 2016 election campaign in part on the idea that the U.S. would erect a wall along its border with Mexico and that Mexico would pay for it.

The bill provides \$1.2 billion to replace fencing along the U.S.-Mexico border that is in need of repair and enhance surveillance of the border with upgraded technology, according to The New York Times.

But ultimately, Trump did sign the bill, saying on Twitter that he needed to do so "as a matter of national security." The budget provided \$654.6 billion for the Pentagon.

## Zanesville Times Recorder

<https://www.zanesvilletimesrecorder.com/story/news/local/2018/03/23/farmers-need-government-overreach/33187387/>

### **Farmers Don't Need Government Overreach**

By John Lent, 3/23/18

I am a farmer who raises cattle and hay. I think the EPA got far too nosy into farmers' lives under the Obama Administration and that created a needless ordeal for us. I am glad that the Trump Administration is addressing this problem by pushing for smart reforms to EPA regulations affecting agriculture.

A few years ago, the EPA told us that we had to put fences around all of our creeks and ponds so the cattle couldn't run in them. The Waters of the United State Rule even gave the government jurisdiction over dry creeks. I don't think matters such as these are any of the government's business. They just don't have the right to tell us how to do things.

When it comes to banning products, we need to make sure that we aren't going after ones that are safe. The previous administration even wanted to ban safe pesticides and that doesn't help farmers at all.

These are all examples of how the federal government further intruded into our land and our lives. Now, our leaders have a chance to correct some of the regulations that were harming farmers. That's a good thing. After all, these regulations weren't helping anyone anyway.

We need our government officials to use common sense. We don't need to be burdened with unnecessary regulations. Small farmers don't make much money to begin with and we should not be harmed by government overreach. I am glad the Trump Administration is working to reverse these intrusions.

John S. Lent

Malta

## The Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/epa-tentatively-decides-to-ease-vehicle-emission-standards-1521842605>

### **EPA Tentatively Decides To Ease Vehicle Emission Standards**

By Mike Spector, 3/23/18

The Environmental Protection Agency has tentatively concluded that future vehicle emissions standards should be eased, a decision long lobbied for by car companies that argued looming regulations are too stringent and need revision.

The EPA has drafted a so-called final determination that outlines arguments for relaxing standards requiring auto makers to cut emissions enough so vehicles sold average more than 50 miles a gallon by 2025, said a person familiar with the matter.

The EPA delivered the draft, which covers standards between 2022 and 2025, to the Office of Management and Budget this week, the person said. The EPA faces an April 1 deadline to determine whether the targets should be strengthened, relaxed or left unchanged.

No changes would be imminent even with the issuing of a final determination. Rules would have to be devised afterward detailing any revisions, a process that could take weeks or months. Bloomberg News earlier reported on the draft determination.

Auto makers have argued the future standards, which for 2025 equate to roughly 36 mpg in real-world driving, are too difficult to meet in an era of cheap gasoline. Low fuel prices have resulted in soaring sales of less-efficient pickup trucks and sport-utility vehicles that now eclipse 60% of the U.S. market. Electric cars that don't contribute to greenhouse-gas emissions amount to only about 1% of U.S. sales.

Still, auto makers also want to ensure that California and other states following its aggressive standards that collectively represent about 40% of the U.S. market are on board with changes, lest they face a patchwork of different rules across state lines.

California currently has an EPA waiver to set its own standards separate and apart from U.S. rules and had been in lockstep with targets the Obama administration finalized just before President Donald Trump's inauguration in January 2017. The Trump administration reopened a review of the future standards after lobbying from car companies, a move that angered California officials.

"The draft determination has been sent to OMB and is undergoing interagency review. A final determination will be signed by April 1, 2018, consistent with the original timeline," said Liz Bowman, an EPA spokeswoman. She didn't elaborate on the contents of the draft.

A spokesman for the California Air Resources Board, the state agency that regulates tailpipe emissions, said officials were "troubled" by word of the EPA's tentative decision to revise the standards. "We have not seen the document in question and California had no input into its content," the spokesman said.

Trump administration and California officials have held meetings and phone calls in recent months, but haven't agreed on any proposed changes. CARB Chairwoman Mary Nichols traveled to Washington in January to meet with officials from the White House, EPA and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, an agency that sets its own separate fuel-economy standards and has been involved in negotiating possible changes.

Ms. Nichols and other state officials signaled a willingness to discuss possible changes at that meeting without committing to any specific proposals. She joined another check-in call with Trump administration officials in recent weeks, the person familiar with the matter said.

"California paved the way for a single national program and is fully committed to maintaining it. However, we feel that this rumored finding—if official—places that program in jeopardy," the CARB spokesman said, adding that revising the future targets would waste fuel, increase emissions and cost consumers more money.

"We won't take any action until we have the opportunity to see the document itself and any supporting data, evidence, or analysis that purports to justify what we think would be an unfounded conclusion," the CARB spokesman said.

"We can't comment on a determination we haven't seen, but remain absolutely convinced that one national program is the preferred policy path," said Mitch Bainwol, head of a Washington lobbying group representing a dozen auto makers, including General Motors Co. , Ford Motor Co. and Toyota Motor Corp.

Auto makers contend that complying with the current standards would ultimately cost them \$200 billion and threaten jobs. Vehicle prices could also rise, leading consumers to keep older automobiles that pollute more longer, the companies argue.

GM Chief Executive Mary Barra met earlier this month with EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt and Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao and "reconfirmed our priorities for modernizing fuel economy standards, which is the need for one national set of requirements and the need to comprehend new technology developments like increased shared and autonomous electric vehicles," a GM spokeswoman said.

Mr. Pruitt has expressed the view that California shouldn't dictate nationwide policy on vehicle emissions.

California Gov. Jerry Brown called the Trump administration's decision to review the standards a "gift to polluters" in a letter last year to Mr. Pruitt. Attorneys general in states across the U.S. that follow California's standards have pledged to take the Trump administration to court if federal targets are weakened.

CNBC

<https://www.cnn.com/2018/03/26/us-stock-futures-dow-data-fed-speeches-and-politics-on-the-agenda.html>

### **Dow Rises 500 Points As Trade Tensions Ease**

By Fred Imbert, 3/26/18

Stocks traded sharply higher on Monday, bouncing back from strong losses in the previous session, as trade tensions between the U.S. and China appear to ease.

The Dow Jones industrial average rose 500 points, with Microsoft as the best-performing stock in the index. The S&P 500 gained 1.8 percent, with technology and financials leading all sectors higher. The Nasdaq composite advanced 2 percent.

The Financial Times reported China has offered to buy more semiconductors from the U.S. to help cut its trade surplus with the U.S. The Wall Street Journal also reported that U.S. and Chinese officials are working to improve U.S. access to China's markets.

Investors "have apparently recognized that a trade war is in no one's best interests and therefore extremely unlikely," said Jeremy Klein, chief market strategist at FBN Securities, in a note. "Specifically, the President merely wants to fulfill a campaign promise while China will only enact token countermeasures to appease its citizens."

Markets overseas also jumped on Monday. In Asia, some indexes rose after news surfaced that the U.S. had agreed to excuse South Korea from steel levies. Meantime in Europe, stocks were slightly higher as investors tried to shake off worries surrounding a potential trade war.

Wall Street finished Friday's session deep in the red on Friday, with the Dow dropping more than 400 points by the close — closing at its lowest level since November and finishing in correction territory, as it was 11.6 percent down from its 52-week high. The S&P 500 ended Friday's session just outside of correction territory.

"The SPX comes into the last week of March and the 1st quarter after of the worst weekly showings in the last decade. With the recent intense back and forth action, the environment is looking more like 2011 once again," Frank Cappelleri, executive director at Instinet, said in a note to clients.



Last week, President Donald Trump signed an executive memorandum that would inflict tariffs on Chinese imports — of up to \$60 billion. China retaliated with their own set of levies, drawing up a list of 128 U.S. products that could be possible retaliation targets.

Social media firms continue to be under the radar, as abuse of people's data remains a key topic of discussion. Last week, reports emerged alleging that Cambridge Analytica, an analytics company, had gathered data from 50 million Facebook profiles without the permission of its users. While Facebook have since come out to apologize and try to rectify the matter, concerns remain. Facebook shares dropped 1.6 percent and briefly dipped into bear market territory.

On the central banking front, members of the U.S. Federal Reserve are due to deliver speeches at respective events Monday, including one by Fed Vice Chair Randal Quarles, who is due to speak at the HOPE Global Forum annual meeting in Atlanta.

## The Associated Press

<https://www.yahoo.com/news/poland-summons-russias-ambassador-over-spy-case-123355904.html>

### **US Expels 60 Russian Diplomats, Shuttters Seattle Consulate**

By Josh Lederman, 3/26/18

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration expelled 60 Russian diplomats on Monday and ordered Russia's consulate in Seattle to close, as the United States and European nations sought to jointly punish Moscow for its alleged role in poisoning an ex-spy in Britain.

Senior Trump administration officials said all 60 Russians were spies working in the U.S. under diplomatic cover, including a dozen at Russia's mission to the United Nations. The officials said the administration was taking the action to send a message to Russia's leaders about the "unacceptably high" number of Russian intelligence operatives in the U.S.

The expelled Russians will have seven days to leave the U.S, said the officials. They weren't authorized to be identified by name and requested anonymity. They added that the Seattle consulate is a counter-intelligence concern because of its proximity to a U.S. Navy base.

White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders said the actions would make the U.S. safer by "reducing Russia's ability to spy on Americans and to conduct covert operations" that threaten U.S. national security.

"With these steps, the United States and our allies and partners make clear to Russia that its actions have consequences," Sanders said.

The move was one of the most significant actions President Donald Trump's administration has taken to date to push back on Moscow and Russian President Vladimir Putin. Less than a week ago, Trump congratulated Putin by phone for his re-election but didn't raise the spy case, renewing questions about whether the U.S. president is too soft on the Kremlin.

The U.S. actions came as more than a dozen nations, including those in Russia's neighborhood, were expected to announce similar steps to reduce Russia's diplomatic presence in their countries or other actions to punish Moscow. Poland summoned Russia's ambassador for talks, and its foreign ministry was among several in Europe planning news conferences later Monday.

Britain has already expelled 23 Russian diplomats, accusing them of being undeclared intelligence agents, which led Russia to expel the same number of British diplomats. The European Union has already recalled its ambassador to Russia.

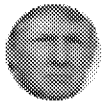
The steps on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean add to a serious escalation of tensions between Russia and the West that has been building since the March 4 poisoning of Sergei Skripal, a former Russian military intelligence officer convicted

of spying for the U.K., and his daughter, Yulia. The two remain in critical condition and unconscious. A policeman who responded to their home was also injured.

Britain has accused Moscow of perpetrating the attack using a Soviet-developed nerve agent known as Novichok. The U.S., France and Germany have agreed it's highly likely Russia was responsible.

Russia's government has denied responsibility and has blasted Britain's investigation into the poisoning. There was no immediate reaction from Russia on Friday to the U.S. announcement.

## TRUMP TWEETS



**Donald J. Trump** ● @realDonaldTrump · 2h



So much Fake News. Never been more voluminous or more inaccurate. But through it all, our country is doing great!



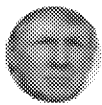
18K



9.3K



40K



**Donald J. Trump** ● @realDonaldTrump · 4h



The economy is looking really good. It has been many years that we have seen these kind of numbers. The underlying strength of companies has perhaps never been better.



14K

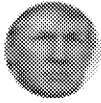


9.0K



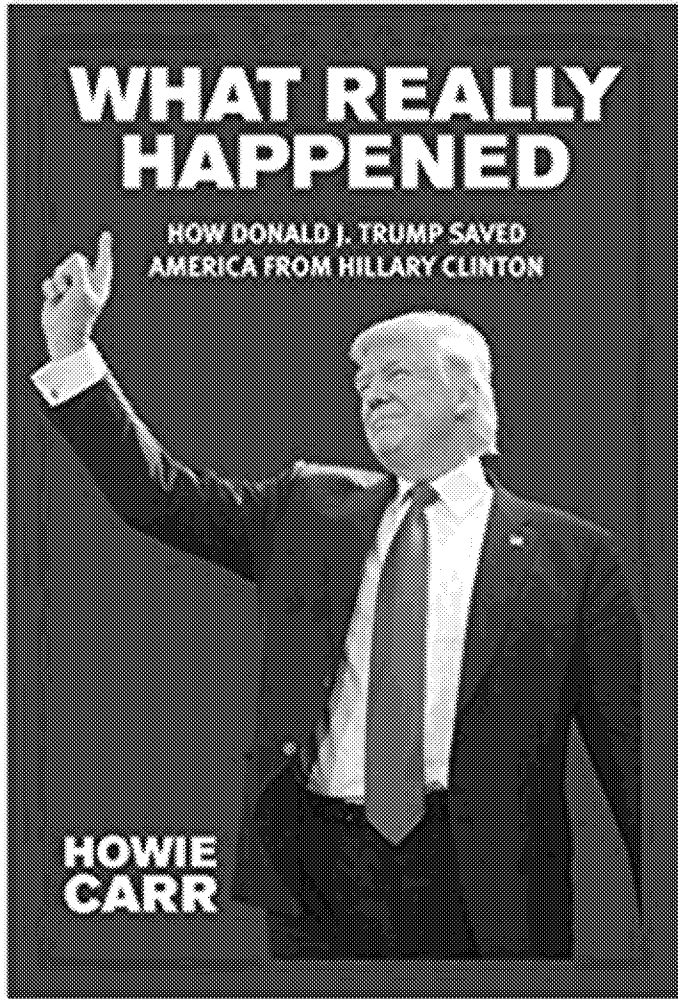
41K





**Donald J. Trump** @realDonaldTrump · 11h

.@HowieCarrShow just wrote a book which everyone is talking about. He was a great help. He is a veteran journalist who had a great influence in NH and beyond. He calls it the most amazing political campaign of modern times. The book is called, "What Really Happened." Enjoy! #MAGA



20K 13K 46K

**Michael Abboud**

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